

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 37-42 and 44-50 are presently active in this case. Claims 1-36 were cancelled by previous amendments. The present Amendment amends independent Claim 37 and dependent Claim 44 without introducing any new matter; and cancels dependent Claim 43 without prejudice or disclaimer.

The August 20, 2009 Office Action rejected Claims 37-45 and 48 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Rosenberg et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0109668, hereinafter "Rosenberg"). Claims 46 and 49-50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Rosenberg.

In response, independent Claim 37 is amended to recite all the features of Applicants' dependent Claim 43, and to recite that "when a counterforce greater than a preset force threshold is applied to the haptic device by the user." These features find non-limiting support in Applicants' disclosure, for example in the specification from page 10, line 41, to page 11, line 3, and in corresponding Figure 3. Consequently, dependent Claim 43 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and dependent Claim 44 is amended to change the claim dependency to independent Claim 37 and to change a minor formality. No new matter has been added.

In response to the rejection of Applicants' independent Claim 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), in light of the amendments to this claim, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this rejection and traverse the rejection, as discussed next.

Briefly summarizing, Applicants' independent Claim 37 is directed to a method for operating a haptic interface unit including a haptic device used by a user for navigating through a displayed list of items and configured to exert an interaction feedback force. The

method including the steps of performing an inverted damping operation mode in which a strength of the interaction feedback force is inverse proportional to a velocity described by velocity data information generated or received by the haptic device, performing a holding force mode in which a strength of the interaction feedback force tends to hold at least one of a user's finger or a hand in place, performing a force well mode in which the interaction feedback force is modulated by values of underlying data included in the displayed list of items, leaving the performing of the inverted damping operation mode when a velocity falls below a damping threshold velocity, and entering the performing of the inverted damping operation mode when the velocity increases above the damping threshold velocity.

In addition, Claim 37 also requires a step of switching from the step of performing the holding force mode to the step of performing the force well mode, when a counterforce greater than a preset force threshold is applied to the haptic device by the user.

Turning now to the rejection reference, Rosenberg is directed to a force feedback system 10 for navigating a cursor within a graphical environment in relation to other graphical objects. (Rosenberg, Abstract, ¶ [0011], ll. 1-5.). His system 10 can control a haptic feedback force to a force feedback interface device 14 to enhance navigation of a cursor 206 in a graphic display environment. (Rosenberg, Abstract, Figs. 1-2.) Rosenberg also discussed that the haptic feedback can depend on a distance between the cursor 206 and the target 201. (Rosenberg, p. 6, ¶ [0052], ll. 10-14, Figs. 1 and 2.)

Moreover, Rosenberg's force feedback interface device 14 includes a user manipulable device 34 capable of controlling the motion of the cursor, for example a mouse or a joystick. (Rosenberg, ¶ [0012], ll. 4-8, ¶ [0032], ll. 1-8, ¶ [0040].) Moreover, his device 14 has sensors 28 and actuators 30 to measure positions and transmit forces to the user-manipulable device 34, respectively. (Rosenberg, ¶¶ [0035]-[0037].) Rosenberg's "haptic effect" is output for each of the graphical objects on a graphical user interface 200 of screen 20, over which the cursor

moves. (Rosenberg, ¶¶ [0045]-[0046].) Rosenberg explains that one of the “haptic effects” that is produced is an attractive/repulsive force, so that a user can be biased to move the user object 34 towards the target. (Rosenberg, p. 6, ¶ [0052], ll. 1-6, ¶ [0054], Figs. 1 and 2.) In other words, in Rosenberg’s method, a distance between graphical objects towards the user-movable cursor determine the different haptic modes, that are applied to the user manipulable device 34.

However, Rosenberg fails to teach all the features of Applicants’ amended, independent Claim 37. In particular, Rosenberg fails to teach the following features:

switching from the step of performing the holding force mode to the step of performing the force well mode, when a counterforce greater than a preset force threshold is applied to the haptic device by the user.

(Claim 37, portions omitted.) The August 20, 2009 Office Action rejected similar features that were previously presented in Applicants’ dependent Claim 43, by pointing out to Rosenberg’s paragraphs [0089]-[0090]. (See Office Action, page 7, ll. 1-9.) However, in these passages of Rosenberg it is explained that in some circumstances, when the cursor moves slowly over many objects that are in close proximity to each other, a lower strength haptic effect should be applied. (Rosenberg, p. 11, ¶ [0089]). This special variant is further described in Rosenberg’s paragraph [0090], where the rate that the cursor encounters graphical objects is measured, to determine a density of graphical objects, to reduce the haptic force. (Rosenberg, p. 11, ¶ [0090]). Rosenberg explains that this feature presents another way of reducing the haptic force, that is usually reduced based on an increase of the velocity of cursor movement. (Rosenberg, ¶ [0089], ll. 10-16, see also ¶ [0076], where it is explained that the strength of the haptic effect is proportional to the cursor velocity.) However, these passages do not anticipate that the mode of applied haptic forces is switched, based on a counterforce that is greater than a preset force threshold to the haptic device,

applied by the user, as required by Applicants' Claim 37. As a fact, Rosenberg's change of haptic forces has nothing to do with a counterforce applied by the user.

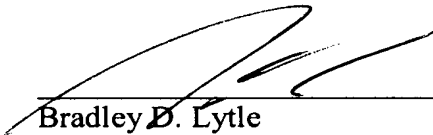
Therefore, the cited passages of the applied reference Rosenberg fail to teach every feature recited in Applicants' Claim 37, so that Claims 37-42 and 43-50 are believed to be patentably distinct over Rosenberg. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse, and request reconsideration of the rejection based on this reference.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 37-42 and 44-50 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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